

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EAIR, AF, GE
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN-EAST GERMAN AIR LINK NEGOTIATIONS

1. A GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC CIVIL AVIATION DELEGATION, HEADED BY DEPTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION DR. KLAUS HENKES, ARRIVED IN KABUL SATURDAY, MAY 20. THE DELEGATION HAS MET WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE ABDUL KARIM MISAQ (AFGHAN CIVIL AVIATION COMES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THIS MINISTRY) AND NOOR MOHAMMAD DALILI, THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFGHAN AIR AND TOURISM AUTHORITY.

2. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, THE DISCUSSIONS HAVE CENTERED ON "AIR TRANSPORT SERVICES BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, AND AN AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED IN THIS REGARD." WE HAVE NO INFORMATION AS TO EITHER WHEN SUCH AN AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED, OR WHAT ITS CONTENT WILL BE. ONE WEST GERMAN DIPLOMAT HAS SPECULATED THAT THE EAST GERMANS WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH A BERLIN - KABUL ROUTE FOR INTER-FLUG, HOPING TO GET A SHARE OF THE PAKISTANI/INDIAN WORKER TRAFFIC TO EUROPE THAT PRESENTLY ARIANA FINDS SO PROFITABLE. WEST GERMANY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION, BUT EAST BERLIN

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WOULD BECOME THE EUROPEAN GATEWAY (RATHER THAN FRANKFURT OR LONDON) FOR THE FLOW FROM KABUL. SCHEDULED SERVICE AND/OR CHARTERS ARE BOTH POSSIBILITIES (LUFTHANSA HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING THE LIMITED CHARTER SERVICE TO KABUL AND EXPECTS A FLIGHT IN JUNE OR JULY). IT IS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN THAT ARIANA WOULD OR COULD -- SCHEDULE RECIPROCAL SERVICE, SINCE IT HAS A LIMITED NUMBER OF ALREADY OVER-SCHEDULED AIRCRAFT.

3. COMMENT: INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM AFGHANISTAN IS PROVIDED LARGELY BY THE NATIONAL AIRLINE, AFGHAN ARIANA AIRLINES (OWNED 49 PERCENT BY PAN AMERICAN). DIRECT SERVICE BETWEEN CAPTIALS IS PROVIDED -- ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS -- BY IRAN AIR, INDIAN AIRLINES, AND AEROFLOT. PIA FLIES TWO FLIGHTS WEEKLY CONNECTING KABUL WITH PESHAWAR. IN ADDITION TO THE LUFTAHANSA ARRANGMENT, AFGHAN AUTH-ORITIES HAVE BEEN HAVING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRC FOR AIR CONNECTIONS FOR SOME TIME, BUT THUS FAR WITHOUT RESULTS. SHOULD AN AGREEMENT BE REACHED WITH THE EAST GERMANS, INTERFLUG WOULD BE THE ONLY CARRIER BESIDES AIRANA CONNECTING KABUL WITH CENTRAL/WESTERN EUROPE. END COMMENT.

4. ECONOMIC COUNSELOR HAS SCHEDULED COURTESY CALL ON CIVIL AVIATION HEAD DALILI TOMORROW (MAY 23), AND WILL ATTEMPT TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AS APPROPRIATE. ELIOT

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